THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI P. RADHAKRISHNAN): (a) Sport is a State subject and its promotion at the grass-root level is largely the responsibility of the State Governments. However, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) through its various schemes such as SAI Training Centres (STC), National Sports Talent Contest (NSTC), Army Boys Sports Companies (ABSC) and Special Area Games (SAG) augments the efforts of the State governments in promotion of the sports at the sub-junior and senior level. Football is one of the major sports disciplines for the promotion at sub-junior and junior level. The selected trainees are provided regular coaching, equipment and sports science back up. The trainees are also made to participate in the Inter Sai Hostel Scheme at regional and national level.

(b) and (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(d) with a view to involve corporate sponsorship, the SAI has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FICCI).

India's non participation at FIFA

438. SHRI C. RAMANCHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India had not participated in the FIFA World Cup 2002, hosted by South Korea and Japan;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) why Indian playres failed to make their mark in any other sports events except cricket and tennis; and

(d) Government's action plan to promote sports like football, with International standards?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI P. RADHAKRISHNAN): (a) Yes, Sir

(b) India could not qualify for participation in FIFA World Cup 2002.

(c) this is not a fact. Indian sports persons in other sports diciplines like Abhinav Bindra and Ms. Anjali Vedpathak in shooting, P. Gopi Chand

in Badminton, Yashin Merchant in Snooker, Geet Sethi and Ashok Shandilya in Billiards and women weightlifters have given excellent performance at international level. Mrs. K. Malleswari won bronze medal in Olympic Games-2000. Indian junior hockey team has won World Cup recently and performance of our kabaddi team has also been excellent in the recent past.

(d) The promotion of any sport is primarily the responsibility of the concerned National Sports Federation-All India Football Federation (AIFF), in this case. The Government, however, supplements the efforts of National sports Federations by providing assistance under its various schemes for international exposure, holding of national/international tournaments, coaching/training of national teams under Indian and foreign coaches, procuring sports equipment and providing requisite scientific and technical back up.

Lower Ranking of Indian Football

†439. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA : Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for poor performance of India in football and for which India ranks nowhere in the world in football, whereas the climate and geographical situation is conducive for this sport;

(b) whether Government are formulating any fresh scheme for generating attraction, interest and motivation for football among the Indian youths; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefoe?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI P. RADHAKRISHNAN): (a) As per current FIFA ranking, India is placed at 123rd rank among 203 football playing nations. As per information received from All India Football Federation (AIFF), FIFA ranking depends on the number of international matches declared by FIFA as International "A" match, a national team plays in a competitive manner from time to time. Indian team's international exposure is not sufficient and that is why ranking is low.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.